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ABSTRACT

European cooperation in vocational counseling is today no longer a matter for specialists alone. Parents, teachers, and trainers are increasingly finding themselves confronted with young people considering the option of taking a traineeship or employment abroad. The counseling available in such cases, however, is often still inadequate. A large number of obstacles on the path toward the "Euro-conseiller," the European counselor, have already been removed, but there are still many hurdles to cross. It is not merely a matter of the national vocational counseling services having the explicit desire to cooperate. Much also depends on the awareness of a "European labour market" and the demand for "European" vocational counseling from parents, teachers, trainers, and all the other persons engaged in some way in initial and continuing training. Recomendations made in 1986 were mainly concerned with the formal framework for institutionalized cooperation. In 1990, it is recommended that projects, studies, and conferences on themes of shared interest be supported. Topics proposed included the following: the structures and operating models of counseling services and their respective advantages and disadvantages; the use of electronic data processing; the establishment of an information system on vocational counseling issues; and the establishment of transnational counseling and placement systems and the preparation of printed counseling documentation based on an analysis of pilot projects in border regions. (CML)

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Vocational Guidance and Counselling: On the Way to "Euro-Counselling"?

As the Europe of Twelve becomes an ever closer knit community, the question of closer cooperation among national vocational counselling services acquires ever greater topicality. In a united Europe there can be no doubt that vocational counselling can serve as a qualitative interface between the forces of supply and demand on the European labour, initial training and continuing training markets.

This, however, presupposes the "Europeanisation" of vocational counselling and in particular the concept of institutionalizing cooperation in this field, a matter which has been on the agenda of many discussions and meetings at European level for some time. That this issue has recently been discussed in greater depth is due not least to the efforts of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). The high priority which the Centre attaches to European cooperation in vocational counselling is also apparent from the CEDEFOP conference to be held on this theme at the end of November.

In preparation for this conference we have drawn up an introductory document charting out the course to be steered in the work and reflections on transnational vocational counselling and showing which practical proposals in that direction have emerged in recent years.

European cooperation in vocational counselling is today no longer a matter for the specialists alone. Parents, teachers and trainers are increasingly finding themselves confronted with young people in their care considering the option of taking up a traineeship or employment abroad. The counselling available in such cases, however, is often still inadequate. A large number of obstacles on the path towards the "Euro-conseiller", the European counsellor, have already been removed, but there are still many hurdles to cross. And this is not merely a matter of the national vocational counselling services having the explicit desire to cooperate: much also depends on the awareness of a "European labour market" and the demand for "European" vocational counselling forthcoming from parents, teachers, trainers and all the other persons engaged in some way or other in initial and continuing training.

CEDEFOP therefore perceives this document as an invitation addressed to all of these population groups to reflect on the present shortcomings and call upon their national authorities to re-design vocational counselling within the context of a European labour market.

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INTRODUCTION

The CEDEFOP Conference on European Cooperation in Vocational Counselling is the culmination of the many and varied activities already undertaken by the European Communities in the field of vocational counselling. It marks the end of one phase but also the beginning of another.

The Conference marks the - provisional - end of the phase which has covered preliminary academic studies, national stocktaking and international system comparisons. It marks the beginning - that, at least, is our intention - of the practical phase, the phase of tangible and constructive cooperation which, given the context of the internal market, should mean that job-seekers in the Member States will be able to seek and obtain sound counselling prior to deciding on their occupation, even if they want to pursue a career in another Member State of the Community.

Our Conference is also intended to integrate. It should pool all the expertise compiled from numerous analyses and integrate the experience which has been gained by vocational counselling services and individual counsellors - in particular in the border regions - from their practical cooperation with colleagues in other Member States.

Integrating expertise and experience also signifies integrating existing action initiatives seeking to strengthen European cooperation. This applies in particular to integrating the activities of the Commission and CEDEFOP with national initiatives and those taken by international and bilateral transnational associations and groupings.

On closer consideration, the timing of the Conference was not an entirely random choice. The Conference comes at time when there is a need for a comprehensive review of the initiatives taken to date by the Commission, CEDEFOP, national authorities and not least international associations of counsellors, but also at a time when there is a need to look ahead and consider the practical implications of the completion of the internal market at the end of 1992 for a genuine "Europeanisation" of vocational counselling.

That our Conference can be held now is attributable not only to the commitment of the staff of the EC Commission and CEDEFOP: the national counselling services themselves and their individual staff members have taken a forefront role in calling for their work to be given a practical European dimension.

This document is intended to provide the participants with a summarized chronicle of the work carried out to date which reveals how these initiatives have matured into a catalogue of concrete, practical recommendations for action. It seeks to relate the history of a Euro-

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pean initiative so that our discussions can concentrate not on the past but instead on developing creative and practical ideas for tackling the tasks which lie ahead.

We hope that this introductory document addresses all the main aspects of a future network of cooperation between the various national services and highlights the role which the Commission, in close cooperation with CEDEFOP, can play within this context.

It is to be hoped that the Conference will produce concrete results, results which are sufficiently general to serve as a basis for constructive European cooperation but also leave the counselling services sufficient scope for taking concrete initiatives to meet national, regional and local needs - this in the spirit of the motto of the Club of Rome: "Think in global categories, but act in accordance with local needs."

REVIEW

The interest shown by the European Communities in vocational counselling can be traced back to a Council Decision of 1963 which, drawing on the statutory provisions of Article 128 of the **Treaty of Rome**, established guidelines for a common vocational training policy. The Decision also states that in implementing the common vocational training policy, special priority is to be given to permanent vocational counselling and information centres for young people and adults; these centres are to hold information on personal aptitudes and training and employment opportunities and should be accessible for consultation by anyone seeking information prior to deciding on an occupation, during training and throughout one's entire working life.[1)]

Following up this principle, in 1966 the Commission announced its intention to publish **regular reports** on vocational counselling activities and the corresponding progress and experience thereby registered.[2)] Such reports were published in 1967, 1968, 1969, 1971 and 1975.

These reports were all compiled in the form of largely unannotated individual reports from the various national authorities. These constituent reports shared a similar structure, but the data contained therein was not processed for comparative analysis, nor was it summarized in a synthesis report.

Subsequently, two further **reports** were drawn up by **independent experts**. The first, by Professor Walter Jaide, covered the period 1975-1980; the second, by Professor Jean Drevillon, covered the period 1975-1983.[3)]

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In 1986 a team of experts led by A. G. Watts (Cambridge) undertook to analyse in detail the **vocational counselling opportunities open to young people** in the Community and use this analytical work as a basis for drawing concrete conclusions for improving European cooperation in this field.[4]

It was mainly because the conclusions set out in the report drawn up by A. Watts in association with C. Dartois and P. Plant were so clear and concrete that in 1988 the EC Commission's Task Force on Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth had **two expert meetings** convened to discuss Community initiatives in the field of vocational counselling. These meetings marked a turning point insofar as they discussed for the first time pragmatic and rapidly implementable instruments for initiating institutionalized European cooperation in vocational counselling and took practical steps towards realizing such cooperation. Examples include the European manual for vocational counsellors and the European training scheme for counsellors.

These ideas were further advanced by two other complementary initiatives taken in 1988 and 1989. Commissioned by CEDEFOP, V. Köditz (Heidelberg) undertook to analyse the **counselling facilities for adults, in particular the long-term unemployed** and to develop concrete recommendations from his findings.[5] This work was then taken as the theme for a CEDEFOP conference which resulted in the further refinement of the proposals developed for Community vocational counselling measures for young people and adults.[6] Thereafter, P. Plant (Denmark) carried out a **study on transnational vocational counselling in border regions.**[7] This study, which covered virtually all regions with significant cross-border mobility between Member States in a way provided the empirical basis for future practical measures insofar as it analysed the needs and problems of counsellors in regions with high transnational work and training mobility. The preliminary conclusions from this study were drawn at a working meeting attended by CEDEFOP staff, national vocational counselling experts, and representatives of national counselling services held in **s'Hertogenbosch**, Netherlands, in **June 1990**.

Pressure to proceed with political implementation has recently been exerted mainly by senior staff members of **national counselling services**. Dr. Leve of the Federal Employment Institute (BA), Federal Republic of Germany, urged his authority to support preparatory investigations for the development of a European manual for vocational counsellors; he also used numerous lecture engagements to emphasise the significance of Europeanising vocational counselling and in particular of introducing a European dimension into initial and continuing training for counselling personnel. Important initiatives were also taken by the Department of Employment in the **UK** and by the **Irish** Government.

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It was not least these major national initiatives which, during the course of 1990, caused the subject of European cooperation in vocational counselling to be placed on the agenda of meetings of the **Education Committee** and of the **Directors-General for Vocational Training**; these influential bodies can continue to ensure that counselling is given high priority in the plans for a "streamlined" EC Action Programme for the Vocational Training of Young People (**PETRA**).

The significance attached by the European Communities to vocational counselling is also reflected in the fact that vocational counselling is an important aspect in other Community programmes and initiatives. Examples include:

- Implementation of the Council Decision of 16 July 1985 on the **Comparability of vocational training qualifications**. The system was put to practical use in the Member States after the publication of the first comparative tables for certain categories of occupation in 1989; in many Member States this task is being carried out mainly by the vocational counselling services, whose activities have thereby directly acquired a European dimension.
- The **Community Action Programme for the Long-Term Unemployed (ERGO)**. Counselling measures for this specific target group are a major part of the European partnerships which have been established within the framework of this programme.
- The **Community Initiative for Border Regions (INTERREG)**. An initiative developed by the Commission for the Community's internal border regions; one of the targets for promotion in these regions is transnational vocational counselling.
- The national comparative studies carried out by **CEDEFOP on behalf of the Commission** on the current situation and **development of the structure of occupational groups**, together with the associated investigations into existing and newly emerging **occupational profiles** within certain occupational groups.

PERSPECTIVES

Although the right to free movement within the Community already exists and the completion of the internal market, therefore, will not directly promote this freedom, the counselling services in the Member States are already facing a number of new challenges and there is a corresponding need for new ideas for Community initiatives.

It can be forecast with some certainty that the internal market will **not lead to renewed migratory movements** of labour of the type experienced in the 1950s and 1960s. It is more likely that as the EC succeeds in narrowing the inter-regional gap and overcoming the deficits of the disadvantaged regions, thereby gradually levelling off living conditions, economically-induced migration will decline and, motivated by non-financial considerations, migrant workers will begin returning to their countries of origin.

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On the other hand, as progress is made in the field of recognizing or otherwise acknowledging higher education and vocational training qualifications throughout the Community, individuals will have new opportunities of working in highly skilled occupations and undergoing training in other EC Member States. The European citizen will be able to undergo vocational training wherever he perceives the most suitable opportunity without having to fear that his training will be worthless in other countries. This **education-motivated migration**, if properly supported and backed up by counselling and information measures, can contribute towards bringing the countries of Europe closer together.

But the counselling services in the Member States are still almost exclusively oriented towards the national context. In the effort to guide young people and adults towards future "European" training and career paths, there is a need to stimulate a rethinking process which will help national counsellors to push back the local, regional and national horizon and become aware of the existence of a **"European labour market"**.

This rethinking process must be systematically supported and calls for institutionalized European cooperation. The following **scenario is not only conceivable but also realizable by the year 2000:**

- senior personnel from vocational counselling services hold regular meetings;
- counsellors of one country work in the counselling service of another country for a certain period of time as fully-integrated staff members (rather like the cooperation between the French and German diplomatic services);
- all counsellors acquire the knowledge and skills required for transnational counselling during initial or continuing training,
- some counsellors undergo training with colleagues from other Member States at a "European counselling academy";
- databases, manuals and contact centres are available to provide the necessary information for young people and adults who want to train or work abroad, or such persons are able to source such information themselves from career information centres;
- a variety of joint projects are implemented, e.g. on the use of electronic data processing in vocational counselling to improve system coherence, or on the use of tests;
- counsellors from the Member States join forces to help build up vocational counselling services in other countries, e.g. in eastern Europe and the Third World;
- there is institutionalized cooperation, also involving careers teachers in schools, in the field of school-based vocational orientation and in particular concerning periods of in-company training for schoolchildren and young people in other Member States.

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RECOMMENDATIONS ON VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING FROM 1986 AND 1990 FOR THE 1990s

The various reports and other documents drawn up at Community level on vocational counselling show a **clear convergence of views** over the years and a **trend towards ever more practical and pragmatic proposals.**

The 1986 **report by A. Watts on vocational guidance for young people** was still mainly concerned with the formal framework for institutionalized cooperation, the author's proposals being

1) that a high-level conference on vocational counselling be held every two years;
2) that the targets set for vocational counselling be incorporated in all action programmes of the Commission relating to the transition from school to adulthood and working life;
3) that study visit and exchange schemes should be developed in order to enable counsellors to learn from developments taking place in all Member States;
4) that support be given for joint projects on counselling issues which are of interest to two or more Member States;
5) that encouragement be given for the establishment of Community-wide networking systems involving counsellors, researchers and policy-makers.

In addition the report presented a list of joint projects, e.g. on initial and continuing training for counsellors, the use of EDP in counselling, self-sourced career information, promotion of instruction in occupational choice.

The **report on vocational counselling for adults, commissioned by CEDEFOP and drawn up by V. Köditz,** complemented the content of these recommendations by suggesting that support be made available for projects, studies and conferences on themes of shared interest, e.g.

1) the structures and operating modes of counselling services and their respective advantages and disadvantages;
2) the use of electronic data processing;
3) the establishment of an information system on vocational counselling issues of shared interest - rather like the EC publication MISEP in the field of labour market policy;
4) the establishment of transnational counselling and placement systems and the preparation of printed counselling documentation based on an analysis of pilot projects in border regions;
5) international seminars on the following themes: methods of validating adults' personal and occupational experience in vocational counselling; vocational orientation for adults; integration of vocational training and counselling; establishment of local and regional networking systems to promote vocational counselling and guidance for adults.

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The report also suggests that consideration be given to Community support for an action programme on vocational counselling similar to the EC action programmes on the transition from school to adulthood and working life.

Specific recommendations were also made by the **Second European Conference on Computers in Career Guidance**, held in Cambridge in 1989. The final report calls upon the EC Commission to support cooperation in this field by promoting regular expert meetings, exchange schemes and study visit programmes.

P. Plant's recent report on transnational counselling presents all these previously advanced recommendations and classifies them into fields of action. Reproduced below, this table reflects the current state of the debate and should therefore be taken as the basis for our discussions.

Field	Activities[8)]
Staff training	Transnational counsellor conferences (2,3) Exchange schemes and study visit programmes (1,2,3) Europeanisation of staff training (1,2,3) Mutual involvement in training (1,3) Language instruction for counsellors
Information	Manual for counsellors (3) Interactive media (video, EDP) (1,2,3) Transnational career and education fairs Databases (education, training, job vacancies) (1,2,3) Transnational exchange of statistics
Innovation	Reports on progress in transnational counselling (1,2,3) Measures to use both informal and formal counselling agencies (1) Support for counsellor networking systems (1) Promotion of projects and studies on new methods and materials in vocational counselling (1,2,3) Evaluation of special transnational counselling activities (1,2,3)
Cooperation	Establishment of a permanent platform for strengthening cooperation between national counselling services

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P. Plant proposes that a limited number of transnational projects should be launched in 1991 and 1992, to be promoted by both the Commission and the Member States. He perceives the **highest-priority fields for action** to be as follows:

- bilingual and multilingual information material and databases on education and employment opportunities in the Member States;
- European continuing training for counsellors;
- transnational exchange schemes for counsellors, seminars and special-interest conferences.

These ideas are more than "mirages": documents are currently being drawn up by the staff of the **EC Commission** which envisage promoting measures in the following fields:

- support for a **networking system** of national counselling and information centres for **information and data exchange** in the field of vocational counselling;
- development of a **European manual for counsellors**;
- introduction of a **European dimension in initial training for vocational counsellors**;
- promotion of the **European dimension in computer-aided counselling and information systems**;
- strengthening of the counselling element in a streamlined **Action Programme for the Vocational Training of Young People (PETRA)**.

FOUNDATION STONES OF EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING

Despite these many and varied initiatives, European cooperation in the field of vocational counselling is still fragmentary; it is still largely confined to analytical work and recommendations with no practical follow-up. In constructing the desired cooperation, therefore, we can describe our present situation as being still at the architectural competition stage when neither the date for laying the foundation stone nor that for completion can be forecast.

The date selected for the Conference casts us in the role of a competition jury: at the Conference the recommendations will be submitted to a body which incorporates the necessary expertise for identifying which options are both desirable and feasible.

What part is to be played by the various institutional levels represented by the participants?

- the **EC Commission** should create the material basis for the networking system by launching new Community programmes and drawing on existing programmes (e.g. PETRA);
- the **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)** would offer its services, in close cooperation with the Commission, as a permanent platform for developing a cooperation

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network; in particular, it could ensure that the findings from research on changing occupational profiles are integrated into the cooperation effort;

- the **social partners** should do everything in their power at national level and within the framework of the "Social dialogue" at Community level to promote European cooperation in vocational counselling and also clearly state their interests and demands in this respect;
- the **national vocational counselling services** have a key role to play: it is largely on their commitment and on that of the competent government departments that the future of European cooperation in their field of endeavour depends.

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1) O.J. No. 63, 20/4/63

2) O.J. No. 154, 24/8/66

3) Jean Drevillon: Rapport sur l'orientation professionnelle dans les États-membres de la Communauté européenne - période 1975 - 1983. Report prepared for the Commission of the European Communities. The report contains summaries of its content in English and German.

4) Anthony G. Watts in association with C. Dartois and P. Plant: Educational and Vocational Guidance Services for the 14-25 Age Group in the European Community, in: Supplement 4/87 "Social Europe", Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1987

5) Volker Köditz: Vocational guidance and counselling for adults: Summary report on the services available for the unemployed and especially the long-term unemployed in Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom: (Ed.) European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), Berlin 1990

6) "CEDEFOP flash" 3/90, languages: DE, EN, FR, IT

7) Peter Plant: Transnational vocational guidance and training for young people and adults, Synthesis report of 8 studies, CEDEFOP, Berlin 1990

8) See P. Plant, op. cit., p. 56 ff.: 1) refers to the Watts study, 2) to the Second European Conference, and 3) to the CEDEFOP report on counselling for adults (V. Köditz).

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